

to implement such grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts.

“(iv) INSTITUTIONAL DIVERSITY.—In awarding grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts to eligible institutions, the Secretary shall ensure, to the extent practicable, that awards are made to all types of institutions eligible for assistance under this subsection.

“(v) NEED.—In awarding funds under this subsection, the Secretary shall give priority to the institution with the greatest demonstrated need for assistance.

“(G) ANNUAL REPORT AND EVALUATION.—

“(i) ANNUAL REPORT REQUIRED FROM RECIPIENTS.—Each institution that receives a grant, cooperative agreement, or contract awarded under this subsection shall provide an annual report to the Secretary on its use of the grant, cooperative agreement, or contract.

“(ii) INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT.—Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Secretary shall enter into a contract with the National Academy of Public Administration to conduct periodic assessments of the program. The Assessments shall be conducted once every 3 years during the 10-year period following the enactment of this subsection. The assessments shall include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the program in improving the education and training of students, faculty and staff at eligible institutions that have been awarded grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts under the program; an evaluation of the effectiveness of the program in improving access to, and familiarity with, digital and wireless networking technology for students, faculty, and staff at all eligible institutions; an evaluation of the procedures established under paragraph (3)(A); and recommendations for improving the program, including recommendations concerning the continuing need for Federal support. In carrying out its assessments, the National Academy of Public Administration shall review the reports submitted to the Secretary under clause (i).

“(iii) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Upon completion of each independent assessment carried out under clause (ii), the Secretary shall transmit the assessment to Congress along with a summary of the Secretary’s plans, if any, to implement the recommendations of the National Academy of Public Administration.

“(H) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

“(i) DIGITAL AND WIRELESS NETWORKING TECHNOLOGY.—The term ‘digital and wireless networking technology’ means computer and communications equipment and software that facilitates the transmission of information in a digital format.

“(ii) ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION.—The term ‘eligible institution’ means an institution that is—

“(I) a historically Black college or university that is a part B institution, as defined in section 322(2) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1061(2)), an institution described in section 326(e)(1)(A), (B), or (C) of that Act (20 U.S.C. 1063b(e)(1)(A), (B), or (C)), or a consortium of institutions described in this subparagraph;

“(II) a Hispanic-serving institution, as defined in section 502(a)(5) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1101a(a)(5));

“(III) a tribally controlled college or university, as defined in section 316(b)(3) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1059c(b)(3));

“(IV) an Alaska Native-serving institution under section 317(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1059d(b));

“(V) a Native Hawaiian-serving institution under section 317(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1059d(b)); or

“(VI) an institution of higher education (as defined in section 365 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1067k)) with an enrollment of needy students (as defined in section 312(d) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1058(d)).

“(iii) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The term ‘institution of higher education’ has the meaning given the term in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

“(iv) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—The term ‘local educational agency’ has the meaning given the term in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

“(v) MINORITY BUSINESS.—The term ‘minority business’ includes HUBZone small business concerns (as defined in section 3(p) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632(p))).

“(vi) MINORITY INDIVIDUAL.—The term ‘minority individual’ means an American Indian, Alaskan Native, Black (not of Hispanic origin), Hispanic (including persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban and Central or South American origin), or Pacific Islander individual.

“(vii) STATE.—The term ‘State’ has the meaning given the term in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

“(viii) STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—The term ‘State educational agency’ has the meaning given the term in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).”

### SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Commerce to carry out section 5(c) of the Stevenson-Wylder Technology Innovation Act of 1980—

(1) \$250,000,000 for fiscal year 2008; and

(2) such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 2009 through 2012.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

□ 1415

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 694, the bill now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 694, the Minority Serving Institution Digital and Wireless Opportunity Act of 2007.

This bill creates a program to improve computer networks at minority-serving educational institutions. The program will award cost-shared grants to eligible campuses to buy networking equipment and train students and teachers in how to use it. The grants will be awarded by the Secretary of Commerce, and the program will be reviewed by the National Academy of Public Administration every 3 years.

In today’s digital world, computer networks are a key part of the edu-

cational experience. But many campuses, especially minority-serving institutions, do not have the resources to build those networks on their own. That hurts the students and makes them less prepared to find jobs when they graduate. H.R. 694 will help fix that problem and enable many students to get the skills they need to compete in the digital economy. I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on H.R. 694, the Minority Serving Institution Digital and Wireless Technology Opportunity Act of 2007, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The legislation has been an initiative of my colleague, Mr. FORBES, for several years and I congratulate him and Representative TOWNS and my colleague, Representative JOHNSON, on getting the legislation brought to the floor for a vote.

The bill requires the Secretary to establish a program to provide grants to increase the use of digital and wireless networking technology for institutions of higher education that primarily serve minorities.

Having been on the board of a minority institution in Texas for many years, I like the intent of the legislation and I want to say a few words about it. The grants may be used for training, education and professional development programs to increase the use of digital and wireless technology or to obtain capacity-building technical assistance and distance learning services.

Additionally, the grants may be used to foster the use of digital and wireless networking technology to improve research and education, including scientific mathematics, engineering and technology instruction.

H.R. 694 will help to provide grants to promote crucial development and educational programs for minority-serving institutions. It will help to ensure that minority students will not fall behind in education on critical digital and wireless networking technology. It will also help to ensure access to the technology and the training programs on the use of these technologies.

While I am a longtime supporter of grants to improve education and training on digital and wireless networking technology, and I commend my colleagues on this very important initiative, I would be a little bit remiss if I didn’t raise some concerns about the process of bringing this bill up and the price tag associated with it.

The bill was referred to the Committee on Science and Technology in February of this year and received an additional referral to the Committee on Education and Labor in June of this year; yet neither of these committees has had a chance to really review the legislation and to hold hearings and to go through the markup process. I am a strong believer in proper order and the